Welcome to WR 241: Creative Writing Fiction

### Instructor: Karelia Stetz-Waters

[Office & Office Hours: NSH 212 (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/english/stetzwk/web.cfm?pgID=3714)

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### The Class

In this class we will study the craft of story writing, with an eye to learning more about ourselves, the human condition, and the world around us.

This is a “workshop” style class. This means that two students will share their story each class period. During the class, we will discuss the stories while the writer listens. The conversation focuses on what the writer is trying to accomplish and how they do that. We will not focus on what the writer did poorly or how they could do better.

During the critique, the writer is not allowed to speak. The readers will refer to the writer as “the writer” or “the author” not “Bob” or “Susan.” At the end of each critique, the writer gets to ask two questions of the group. This is an opportunity to ask for feedback on what could be better or to simply ask about the reader’s impressions.

### Official Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

Demonstrate the skills of fiction writing (dialogue, setting, character, conflict, etc) through learning and practicing the craft of fiction writing in a workshop environment. Write and speak effectively about the craft of fiction writing. Interpret fiction through critical evaluation. Write fiction that addresses elements of the human condition. Participate in activities that encourage personal awareness, growth, and/or creativity through fiction writing.

### Needed for Class:

* Paper
* Pens
* Internet
* Ability to print about 30, double-sided pages a week

### Assignments

* Story first draft 20 %
* Peer review session 10%
* Story second draft 20%
* Self-reflection 5%
* Peer review letters (2) 30%
* Annotations 15

### Participation & Attendance

Active participation in class is expected and will be measured by your annotations and peer review letters. You must be present in class (on time and present for the entire period) to receive credit for turning in a peer review letter or an annotation.

Food and drink are permitted in class but please do not bring anything sticky, smelly, otherwise off-putting. Do not bring a giant steak and onion sandwich to class.

Contrary to popular opinion, being angry and depressed does not make you a great writer. For that reason, I want our class to be a safe, fun, friendly environment where all students, from all walks of life, feel comfortable sharing their work and their idea. Be kind and respectful and bring your true and best self to class. **Being genuinely or intentionally mean to your classmates (after having been clearly warned about this behavior) will result in a failing grade in the class.**

According to the [UCLA Loneliness Scale](https://artemciy.gitlab.io/loneliness-scale/#/), the Millennial and Gen-Z generations are the loneliest in America. Many people attribute that to the rise in cell phone use and social media. Let’s combate that!

Please do not use computers or phones in class or in the hallway before class. Instead, converse with your classmates about their writing or their other classes and interests. If you need to make an important call/text, please move to another part of the building.

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### Guidelines for Stories

* Stories must be original (i.e. written for this class).
* Stories must be between 10 and 15 pages, double-spaced with reasonable fonts/margins.
* Second drafts must track changes in Word. (I’ll explain how.)
* If you are stuck trying to think of an idea for your story, consider this prompt. Choose a word from the [Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](http://www.dictionaryofobscuresorrows.com/). Write a story that captures the feeling or spirit of this word.
* Genres may vary. All genres (science fiction, horror, romance, young adult) are welcome. Literary fiction is welcome. See me if you are having trouble thinking of what to write.
* Original short stories are prefered but sections of longer works are acceptable. (The writing must be original material written during this term.)
* Fanfiction is acceptable for writers who consider themselves beginners. Experienced writers should challenge themselves to create their own characters.

### Content restrictions for stories written in this class follow industry standards. Including the following:

* No work that promotes or glorifies torture, rape, or sex abuse of any kind.
* No work that promotes or glorifies bigoted ideologies (racism, sexism, homophobia etc.)
* No work that defames people living or dead.

### Additionally, I ask the following:

* No pure erotica (although sexual content is okay with a trigger warning)
* No stories about people in our class (or fictional characters similar to people in our class)
* Please put a content warning on stories that have graphic violence (rape, torture, violence against animals/children) or highly sexual content.
* Please honor your own feelings but be as resilient as possible. This is a supportive environment in which to practice resiliency (a vital skill for success and survival).

### What if Karelia doesn’t like my story?

* Happily, my liking/disliking of your story doesn’t matter. Nor does your like/dislike of your classmates’ stories matter. (We’ll get into why later.) Your grade will be based on effort, attentive and intelligent revisions, and self-reflection.

### Peer Review Letters

* You will be assigned two stories to critique.
* Peer review letters should be real letters addressed to your classmates and consisting of about 1000 words. Letters must answer these questions:
	+ What do you think the author was trying to accomplish in this story?
	+ What specific words, phrases, ideas, images, organizational patterns, themes etc. worked to accomplish this goal?
	+ What were the most effective or compelling features of this story?
	+ How did you relate to the story personally?

To receive credit for your peer review letters you must be in class on the day the work is reviewed. If you miss that deadline because of unforeseeable calamity (illness, sudden death etc.) you make make-up the assignment by doing the **next** round of peer reviews. If you miss that round, you miss that assignment.

### Annotations

* You will be responsible for printing each story and bringing the printed copy to class.
* Print with reasonable margins so as to leave room for your annotations. You can use the comment feature in Word or Google docs, but you must bring a printed copy of your annotations to class.
* Include one-two substantive comments per 500 words in the story.
* Comments like “great” or “nice detail” do not count although you are encouraged to include them. You are also encouraged to include supportive comments about your reading process (e.g. "what's behind the door?" or "he must be so happy" or "I'm holding my breath for her."
* To receive credit for your annotations you must be in class on the day the work is reviewed.

Annotations are about what the author is doing, not about what they did poorly.

NOTE: Everyone in the class **MUST** **read, print, and annotate** every short story presented. If I sense that someone has not read, printed, or annotated the day’s stories, I reserve the right to assign additional peer review letters…for the whole class. Police your colleagues!

### Fine Print from the College

#### Incompletes

If you have completed 80 percent of the course work by the end of the term but are unable, for reasons that are generally not your fault, to complete the rest, I will grant you an incomplete.

#### Disability Services

If you have a documented disability, I will help you in any way I can. Talk to me during the first week of class. If you think you might have a disability, but you are not sure, contact Disability Services, 917-4789. [Here is a lot more useful information about Disability Services and LBCC's disability policies. (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](http://www.linnbenton.edu/go/disability-services)

#### LBCC Non-Discrimination Policy

 Everyone is welcome at LBCC, regardless of whether they are black, white, Latino, native, gay, straight, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, male, female, transgender, married, disabled, a veteran, a non-English speaker, an immigrant, or any number of other categories not listed here. [For the official nondiscrimination policy click here. (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](http://www.linnbenton.edu/go/about-lbcc/policies/equal-opportunity) What is more, LBCC sees our differences as a source of strength and an important part of education.